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Since 1881

# AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

NEWSLETTER

March 21

## March 2021

### March VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00pm\*

Presentation begins: 7:15pm

### “WHAT DO YOU FEED YOUR PET RAVENS: DECODING NORSE MYTHOLOGY”

*Lois Liggett*, one of our remote branch members (Vermont!) will discuss the topic of her soon-to-be-published book regarding Norse mythology. Since moving to Vermont, Lois has deeply researched Norse and Celtic mythology. Through these studies, she recognized the need for the public to understand the function of MYTH and the truths that lie embedded within. Mythology and religion go hand in hand. She refers to applied mythology as the religion we bring into our daily lives. Lois will discuss peoples’ need for "new myths" that may not be new at all. Please join us to hear from our long-distance member and friend on this fascinating topic!

NOTE: All members will receive an email with the Zoom information about a week before the meeting and a reminder email a day before. You can forward the email to any friends and family who may be interested in this meeting. Ideally, please provide their email so I can send the reminder.

\*New meeting start time

### Virtual Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 9, at 7:00pm

Log in to Zoom meeting: 6:50pm

Board meetings are open to all members. If you want to attend, please email Heather Reichardt: [hjr1234\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:hjr1234@gmail.com) to receive a Zoom meeting invitation/link.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- *Edie Allison*

I hope you share my optimism that things are getting better and brighter. Spring is coming, your AAUW branch has new and continuing activities for you, covid-19 vaccinations have arrived for many of our members and their families, and Montgomery County government and the Maryland General Assembly are working to improve the education and economic impacts of covid-19 restrictions. In addition, women's rights are clearly on the Maryland legislative agenda.

Our branch continues monthly programs on Zoom, with Lois Liggett presenting a program on Norse mythology on March 16. This presentation illustrates one benefit of Zoom meetings: attendance is not limited by where you live, stormy weather or your access to transportation. Lois, a long-time Gaithersburg resident, now participates in our branch from Vermont.

In addition to our monthly meetings, we continue to collect used books in anticipation of a future sale. And the Great Decisions discussion group restarted in February. The group's foreign policy topics this year are especially pertinent in view of the changes that the pandemic and a new presidential administration are making on global trade and international cooperation policy.

You may join the Great Decisions group at any time.

Our county and state governments are working to mitigate economic and educational inequality. Moreover, Montgomery County Public Schools are using grants and donations to operate multiple small-group learning hubs at over 50 county schools. These initiatives are helping low-income students and essential-worker families to benefit from a safe, supervised access to virtual education, play time, and nutritious meals.

The Maryland General Assembly is now working on many bills which focus on educational reform and on women's safety and economic security. The legislature recently overrode Governor Hogan's 2020 veto of the legislation implementing education reforms included in the Kirwan Commission recommendations. Override of another of the governor's vetoes

assures a stream of digital advertising taxes to help pay for the Kirwan recommendations. Proceeds from sports betting, as approved in the November election, will also help fund educational enhancements; the legislature is now developing the implementation rules.



The Maryland legislature is also working on passing the Family Medical Leave Insurance Program. This legislation would provide up to 12 weeks of paid family leave, funded by small payroll deductions. This is especially important to women, who carry the major burden of caring for family. Currently, Maryland has a parental leave benefit for state employees, and federal law provides unpaid leave to about half the workers. You can see the description of other proposed legislation that is supported by Maryland AAUW and other women's groups in the MLAW, the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, website [mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://mdlegagendaforwomen.org).

Finally, my two-part safety wish—from a scientist and the mother of a biochemist:

1. Please preregister for a vaccine appointment call when you are eligible, and get the shots when offered.
2. Do not forward a "nontransferable" vaccination appointment invitation to someone else. It only lengthens the lines of people waiting in the cold.

## NEWS FROM THE DISTANCE - Jean Hirsch

*We have missed Jean Hirsch since she and her husband, Roland, left us for a retirement community in Overland Park, Kansas. Mary Wykes received a Christmas letter from Jean, which we share with you.*

Dear Friends,

We are writing to send you our greetings for Christmas and to bring you family news for the year that is just ending. We are fortunate to be living at the Tallgrass Creek retirement community where we are well taken care of during the current virus and enjoy being with our friends.

Our daughter Betsy and her husband Chris Bajwa live in Bethesda, Maryland. David (18) is a senior at The Heights School and plans to study mechanical engineering. Elise (16) is a sophomore at Brookewood School, and John (14) is homeschooling and composed his first symphony. Our daughter Sallie and her husband, Ashley Johnson, live in Seattle, Washington with their children Lucie (10), who is in 4th grade and loves learning Math via virtual schooling, and Felix (8), who is in 2nd grade and enjoys his friends. Our son Paul as well as his son, Alexander (9), live nearby in Overland Park. His daughter Emilee (19) is a sophomore at Wichita State

University. His son James (24) lives in Lawrence, Kansas, and works for an interesting company, merchtable. Due to Covid, some of these family members have been participating virtually in learning and work....



Jean is active in the Garden Club at Tallgrass Creek, and has been in the Virtual Chancel Choir and a Bible Study Group at the Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Leawood, Kansas. she will be joining PEO Chapter IR - Leawood in January 2021. Roland is still active in the American Chemical Society and gave an ACS national meeting presentation (on line) about climate science this year, and will give one in Washington next May. He is also in a Cornerstone bible study group.

We offer you our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Jean [and] Roland

### IN MEMORIAM

We lost our member Marybeth Morsink, who died on January 24. She had been a member since 2011 and had served as secretary.

Marybeth's death followed soon after the death of her husband, Hubert. Both had spent their lives as global citizens, working with the United Nations around the world while raising their three children.

Marybeth's international work started out in teaching social work and community development at Beirut College for Women. Then she joined the UN's Beirut office in the Technical Assistance Program as an advisor to the Lebanese government on family and child welfare. Other UN field assignments followed, including for the UN High Commission for Refugees as a consultant and for the Consumers International at the UN organizations located in Geneva.

Marybeth was a dedicated and helpful member of our branch, and she greeted everyone with a smile. Even in a brief conversation, she listened and showed that she cared about what we were saying. We will miss her cheerfulness.

## GREAT DECISIONS

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



The Great Decisions interest group will meet via Zoom on Friday, March 19, at 2:30 p.m. to discuss "The Future of Persian Gulf Security."

The author of the topic in the study guide is Lawrence Potter, professor in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

New members are always welcome. I still have some copies of the study guide if anyone wishes to purchase one. Contact me at 301-717-1040 or [mary.wykes\[at\]aol\[dot\]com](mailto:mary.wykes@aol.com).

### AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH

**Website:** [gaithersburg-md.aauw.net](http://gaithersburg-md.aauw.net)

*Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.*

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President

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# **AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF ZOOM MEETINGS**

Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 9 - 7 p.m.

Branch Meeting

Tuesday, March 16 - 7:15 p.m.

Great Decisions

Friday, March 19 - 2:30 p.m.

The American Association of University Women  
Gaithersburg Branch  
437 Fellowship Circle  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877